sculpture is to be displayed and elucidated by Professor Cockerell.

As a noted and remarkable Roman station, the *Lindum Colonia*,—as still retaining fragments of walls and gateways of the old fortified city,—and particularly as displaying bold and singular features of a Norman castle and a domestic private residence, with numerous churches and other vestiges of former times,—Lincoln cannot fail to afford ample matter for the study and admiration of the old and young antiquaries who visit it for the first time.

We propose to lay before our readers notes of such of the papers read as have architectural interest, and particulars of some of the excursions.

Annexed we give an engraving of the very interesting Early English porch (thirteenth century) which is attached to the west side of the south transept,—a peculiar position. It has three entrances, north, south, and west, with a small room over it, and is well worked. This and the Galilee porch at Ely, which we gave some time ago,* may be regarded as the two finest specimens of Early English porches in the kingdom. The Lincoln porch inside is finely groined. The "decorated" circular window in the south end of this transept is one of the finest remaining: we gave an engraving of it a short time ago.† It is 23 ft. 8 in. in clear diameter.

Lincoln Cathedral is full of interest and offers numerous points for study and comparison. Our notice next week will be accompanied by a fine interior view of the Chapter House.

THE QUEEN'S BOX AT THE ITALIAN OPERA-HOUSE.

THE box which was constructed on the occasion of her Majesty's state visit last week to the Italian Opera House, Covent Garden, deserves special note, as well on account of its elegance and the rapidity with which it was effected, as because it was an innovation,—a step out of the beaten track,—which had all the prognosticators against it, and was taken in the face of numberless shrugs, and "it won't do." The box was formed in the centre of the house, on the grand tier, projecting with a graceful curve in front, and comprising the lobby behind, so as to present a spacious saloon. Over it was an enriched canopy, with very full curtains on either side, of Indian brocade and white lace, surmounted by a large (rather too large) crown and cushion, with a number of glittering flags disposed in form behind it,—the whole reaching up to the front of the amphitheatre stalls. The box was lined with white, ornamented with gold stripes and small bouquets of flowers at regular intervals, with double vallance of white lace all round it. There was a bordering of roses on the floor, and under the ceiling; and the columns which carry the tier of boxes above, entwined with flowers, bore numberless wax lights. The retiring room, with a magnificent toilet, and the saloon adjoining, were fitted up in a similar manner, and lined with flowers, cleverly disposed as to form and colour. When it is remembered that the front of the box was built out solidly to accord with the remainder of the circle, with the like gilt enrichments and decorations, all, of course, made purposely for the occasion, and that the whole was of necessity executed between one opera night and another,—between the Tuesday and the Thursday,—the result seems marvellous. The whole was most creditable to the taste and skill of Mr. Frederick Gye, by whom it was executed, and to the spirit and liberality of the proprietor, Mr. Delafield.

The same liberality has been extended to the production of the opera, "The Huguenots," played for the first time on that occasion, and which must be placed amongst the finest things ever done in England. A garden scene, with the Queen's chateau on a mount, to the left, and an extensive flight of embowered stone steps reaching half the height of the stage, and by which all the characters approach and retire, is exceedingly effective.

* See p. 274, vol. v.

† See p. 84, *ante*.

BAPTISMAL BASIN, VITERBO.

BAPTISMAL BASIN AT VITERBO.

ALL the constructions which have been put up in this city for the distribution of water in the public places, have so much elegance and grace as to have gained for Viterbo the title of the city of the beautiful fountains.

In an obscure corner of the damp cathedral of St. Laurent, lies forgotten the elegant basin, of the sixteenth century, of which we give an engraving in our present number. This basin serves as a font: in the centre rises a triangular pyramid, supported by dolphins, and sculptured into three niches. The ornaments of the basin and its pedestal are very beautifully executed, but are in a bad state of preservation. The height of the basin from the ground is 3 feet 10 inches: its diameter 4 feet. The total height is 6 feet 8 inches.

PAYMENT OF COMMISSION TO ARCHITECTS BY THE TRADESMEN.

SIR,—In your number of the 8th inst. you published a letter signed "A Tradesman," making some remarks on the above subject. The evil he there speaks of—that of architects charging commission on contractors, as well as employers, is of much greater importance than even "A Tradesman" seems to think.

That it is an evil of very great extent will be admitted by every builder, of any amount of business amongst architects; the commission that a contractor will submit to, sometimes influencing the decision of the architect, upon *tenders*, and giving rise to a great deal of disreputable arrangement, always greatly to the prejudice of the employer; while in works that are disposed of without tender it becomes much more a matter of business.

The effect of the practice is most prejudicial to all parties. The proper relation between the architect and contractor becomes immediately cancelled, for how can an architect maintain the proper control over the work, and extra charges of the contractor, when he, at the outset, commits so great a breach of trust against his employer, that it is at any time in the power of the contractor to injure him by exposure?

Another practice equally reprehensible is that of an architect raising forced loans from the contractor, the refusal of which would be visited by the most unmitigated severity, so that the contractor would soon learn that he had better give double the sum demanded rather than resist.

In addressing to you these few lines it is very far from my wish to calumniate architects as a body, or to stigmatise the character of any individual; but it is to defeat certain practices which can only be successfully grappled with in this way. Among architects I am acquainted with many of the most estimable character and the most undeviating rectitude of conduct; but still I must confess that I have fallen in contact with some of very opposite principles: that they are a minority I most cheerfully admit, but that minority is sufficiently numerous to render the exposure extremely desirable to all parties. That these statements are not unfounded I appeal to the large body of your readers: it will be known to most contractors, though I have no doubt many will doubt their truth, except in a few isolated instances, knowing that the body contains so many of the brightest ornaments of society.

We have seen the evil,—what is the remedy? That moral principle that should exist in the breast of every man. The sin requires two parties: the one to whom such an offer is made ought as a man to resist the temptation, and condemn the practice whenever he hears of it. Both parties would recoil with horror from trafficking in fraudulent bills, or false transfers of property; but a false contract is equally criminal, though many men think they can transgress in matters affecting their own business without committing any crime, while in any other they would look upon a similar transaction with

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